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INAUGURAL ADDRESS  
DELIVERED AT THE OPENING  
OF THE  
SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY,  
GREENSBORO, ALA.,

BY THE  
REV. W. M. WIGHTMAN, D. D. LL. D.,

PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE TRUSTEES.

MARION, ALA.:  
GEORGE C. ROGERS, PRINTER.  
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## ADDRESS.

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We meet to-day to inaugurate the Southern University. The period of anxious, hopeful preparation is past. The time for action has come. This brilliant assembly, these venerable ministers of religion, these honored trustees, this company of young men, this group of learned Professors—all, witnesses of these Inaugural solemnities, are but the representatives to fancy, of that august cloud of witnesses, —our contemporaries in various parts of the land, our successors in generations to come, who hang over the scene with solemn interest. To this spot, henceforth hallowed as the shrine of letters, of science and philosophy, the sanctuary of that divine Truth which encompasses and ennobles all the rest, come from far the thoughts and sympathies, the wishes and prayers of patriotism and piety. And if there be less of objective glitter and force of impression in the circumstances which surround us than might be found in the coronation of an Emperor or the inauguration of a President, to a profound thinker who grasps remote results and ultimate consequences to society and the individual, to civilization and to Christianity, there would be in the opening of a great seat of learning a force of moral impression which no military pomp or civic splendors could enhance. We are about putting in motion instrumentalities noiseless as the vernal influences, but as potent. The subject of these agencies is the human mind in its plastic, formative period—the most precious thing on earth. The end aimed at is the culture of this mind, the unfolding of its capabilities, the placing it in harmonious relation to the great plan of divine Providence, the expansion of its immortal faculties which point to other stages of existence, and embrace eternity as their proper field;—in a word, the realization of the grand Idea of Humanity. The means brought into requisition comprehend all rules of discipline that tie down the student to specified periods of mental labour, and produce habits of methodical and patient investigation. In this retreat from the noise of the great world, the lessons of heavenly wisdom from the divine Book address him every day. Classic literature is made to open its golden treasures to his view. Abstract Mathematical science, History, the Belles Lettres, Physical science,



the Philosophy of mind, of morals, of politics ;—all influences that expand thought ,purify taste, nurse reflection, develope energy ,kindle enthusiasm, inspire the wish and direct the aim of excellence, are laid under contribution. And the finished product of all this elaborate care is the man of culture and refinement, fitted to adorn the private walks of life, the patron of every improvement ; the statesman who carries into the councils of his country the love which cherishes and the ability which can defend her liberty and augment her glory ; the scholar furnished with inexhaustible resources of refined enjoyment, an example of the highest forms of intellectual cultivation ;—the christian minister glowing with lofty and sanctified zeal, a light to them that sit in darkness, a guide to the wandering, pointing their steps to the gates of heaven and leading the way.

This University rises as the noblest monument erected to sanctified learning by the munificence of the Southern Methodist Episcopal Church. The annual Conference of Alabama felt the need, in behalf of the large and growing community it represents, of a central Institution of learning, of high grade, broad and comprehensive plan, ample endowments, and commanding influence. An inquiry was set on foot to ascertain whether the members of the Church and the friends of liberal education in general, would support a really great movement. The result is what you this day see. The response presents you with the noblest instance and illustration of confidence, co-operation and liberality known to the history of the Church in the direction of liberal education. We have the proof before us, that the enterprise which conceives large plans for the public good, and aims at far-reaching results as well as the supply of immediate wants, is apt to be met with the energy begotten of confidence, and impelled by enthusiasm. Our men of wealth have contributed their tens of thousands ; persons in more limited circumstances have not withheld their gifts ; a charter of ample provisions and singular privileges has been granted by the State ; this imposing structure has arisen ; others, corresponding in elegance and devoted to the uses of the University, are in process of erection ; an endowment of between two and three hundred thousand dollars has been secured ; the services of literary and scientific gentlemen of established reputation, as a Faculty of instruction, have been laid under contribution ; and this auspicious day witnesses the commencement of a career, destined, we devoutly trust, to meet the largest expectations of the Conference ; to remunerate a thousand fold those who have laid out their most liberal investments of property, of labour, of anticipation, and of prayer ;

a career through all coming time, illustrious and blessed ; which will promote public liberty ; rear great men—the special want of representative governments ; advance intellectual refinement ; and diffuse the blessings of a christian culture and civilization over ever-widening circles.

Standing in the midst of facts and auguries like these, pardon me if you judge the warmth of my enthusiasm somewhat excessive. I confess to have been deeply touched by one aspect of the case. We are on the edge of “the garden of Alabama.” Below us stretches out a belt of country unparalleled in fertility. Far as the eye can reach, the magnificent spectacle, meets it, of that great crop which clothes the world and sustains American commerce. Of the forty-two millions of dollars which the last crop brought to South Alabama, the canebrake lands furnished no mean portion. I have asked myself the question—what is to be the result of this vast material prosperity ? Are these annual accumulations of wealth destined to be turned into fixed capital for still ampler gains ?—or expended in luxurious living ? Can the old Republican simplicity of manners long survive this inundation of wealth ? Is the coming generation of rich mens’ sons doomed to be a degenerate breed, lapped in opulence and dandled in ease and luxury, the prey of these vices which haunt the abodes of the indolent and effeminate ? Can the religion of the Cross, with its severe and holy law of absolute consecration of property as well as genius, of talents and gifts of all kinds to the service of Christ, be expected to live through many generations in the stifling atmosphere of a prosperity such as this ?

When questionings of this sort have arisen, I have turned my eyes to the heaven-pointing towers of this Institution, and bidden away my anxieties. Here is the proof that our men of wealth know how to act as God’s stewards, by consecrating their property to the best uses. Here is the pledge that our prosperity is destined to be not a curse but a blessing, a public benefaction and an honorable distinction. In the rise of this munificently endowed University, I see more than the groveling utilitarianism which would fain foster science because it may invent a machine, intensify a manure, or enlarge a crop ; or, in a word, help us to make more money. I see the manifestation of nobler views of duty, of man, of the destiny of our country, than are comprehended merely in the development of physical resources, the building of Rail Roads, or the art of elegant architecture. In rearing a seat of christian learning like this, you have made a grand contribution to letters, to science, to æsthetic tastes, to morals,

to free institutions, to good government, to religious culture:—and without these, what after all, are broad lands, waving harvests, the cotton-gin and the steam-engine?—what to us; what to the generations to come!

The German University realizes the highest ideal of European institutions of that class. It is well styled the culminating point of public instruction; the common school, and the Gymnasium which corresponds generally to the American College, furnishing preliminary stages of education. It embraces four Faculties, Theology, Law, Medicine, and Philosophy or Arts. Each of these employs the services of Ordinary and Extraordinary Professors, *Privatim Docentes*—licenced Lecturers, made up chiefly of graduates of the University. All the instruction is carried on by means of lectures, the students selecting at their option, the course they wish to attend. The English Universities are collections of Colleges and Halls, each possessing its separate buildings and library, its own Head, and Tutors and students. The University possesses the authority of examining students and conferring degrees; in most other respects it stands *nominis umbra*. The instruction of the under graduates passed by degrees into College halls from University lecture rooms, and finally into the hands of private Tutors. Thus, to a great extent, the University course of study is abolished; “the shreds of the Professorial system,” in the language of Sir Wm. Hamilton, “are now little more than curious vestiges of antiquity; and boys who ought to be under the strict discipline which properly belongs to the Gymnasium, are endowed with a University freedom which ends, in regard to many of the students, in frivolity and dissipation.”

In this country which originally derived its Collegiate system mainly from that of the English Universities, the Colleges both furnish instruction and confer degrees. The terms University and College, are therefore very often used interchangeably. Their ordinary method of instruction by daily class recitations combined with occasional lectures, resembles more the German Gymnasium system than the University practice; and is decidedly preferable for the class of youths who frequent their halls, many of them of tender age, and whose preparatory studies in the department of literal arts have not been sufficiently completed to enable them to pursue an extended and thorough course by means of learned lectures. Three or four, out of the multitude of American Colleges, are Universities, in the full sense of the term, embracing in addition to the Faculty of Arts, the Faculties of Theology, Law, and Medicine; and combining *professional*



education with that liberal and thorough training which should be sought independently of all professional ends. There are others of our Colleges which furnish facilities for prosecuting an extended course in the liberal arts, after the completion of the regular curriculum and graduation. Others still, embrace in their arrangements provisions for regular instruction in Divinity, Law, and scientific schools. In this class, the founders and guardians of the Southern University have placed the institution whose exercises are now inaugurated. Their scheme embraces eight distinct, permanent Professorships :—that, namely, of Moral Philosophy, of Ancient Languages, of Mathematics, of Natural Philosophy, of Chemistry, of Modern Languages, of Biblical Literature, and of Law. Five of these chairs have been filled ; and the institution is prepared to give full instruction in the Collegiate department embracing the usual curriculum in the Faculty of arts and Philosophy, together with an extensive course in civil Engineering. The University department will be opened and provided for, just as the demand of the public and the growth of the institution indicate the proper time.

While for all the purposes of the former department, the endowment already secured may be considered sufficient, yet to carry out the full design of the institution, in the latter department, and to make it a chosen and worthy resort of our own graduates and of those of our numerous Colleges, as a centre of Professional schools of the highest grade, additional buildings, extensive Libraries, full cabinets, and an observatory furnished with instruments of the best powers are needed. It is to be hoped that our worthy and energetic Agent will slacken neither zeal nor effort ; and that the munificent offerings of the friends of such a seat of learning in the heart of the cotton-growing States—*Southern* from foundation to battlement—will not cease until the full sum of \$500,000 is secured. From our present point of view, looking backward, we see ground for the most confident expectation for the future. Our success thus far, furnishes a powerful incentive to carry out in triumphant evolution the most enlarged plans of the founders and friends of the institution.

Having stated in the most general terms, the arrangements set on foot by the Trustees of the Southern University, I shall avail myself of your indulgence for a few observations on the subject of a proper standard of scholarship and a suitable curriculum of studies ; of the modes of instruction and discipline best adapted to the end contemplated in the course of study ; and the necessity for the amplest provisions, open to us in the nature of the case, for the interpenetration,

through the whole process of liberal education, of the spirit and life of religion.

What is the true criterion by which to determine a curriculum of studies in the Faculty of Arts, in an institution of learning which claims to belong to the highest grade? Two answers may be given. First, we may make the extensive impartation of knowledge as a preparation for active life, the standard and test by which we judge of the function of an educational course. Practical utility, which is able to connect the whole concensus of studies with results that have marketable value, furnishes this criterion. Scientific information directed to the regulation and direction of the various classes of human activities, and fitting one by an ample classification of knowledge and stock of facts, for the earnest business of practical life—this is held to be the ideal of liberal education.

In the second place, we find a much higher and truer criterion in the symmetrical development and thorough training of the mental powers. The true value of liberal education, according to this standard, is estimated neither by the extent of information put into the mind, nor by the fitness it is supposed to give for particular business pursuits in after life; but rather by the unfolding and drawing out of the intellectual faculties to the full extent of their capacity, in harmonious proportion, and with the greatest efficiency and precision. Training mainly, and information subordinately, I hold to be the proper theory of scholastic education. According to this criterion, whatever course of studies tends most directly and fully to cultivate the powers of the mind, to awaken and expand the taste, and produce habits of patience, accuracy, method, and mental ability, is the best for the grand purposes of liberal education.

That there should be a period of general scholastic culture, going before the time of strictly professional studies, is easily shown. The general improvement of the mind fits its activities for the most rapid and thorough mastery of the speciality involved in the professional course. The habits of analysis and methodical progression, of manly grapple with difficulty, and thorough investigation, have been formed in the foregoing education. They are vigorously and successfully applied in the particular direction which the professional education now takes. The collegiate discipline has impressed the abiding aptitude of looking for the general principle amidst the details of manifold facts; of binding up those facts into system by means of the underlying principle, and thus of reducing them to a science. This philosophising spirit, the most generous of the products of scholastic

culture, is carried into every department of after study, and becomes the instrument of the mind's highest and most rapid achievements, while it supplies ever fresh sources of satisfaction and invigoration to the advancing intellect.

And furthermore: the mind is protected against the tendency to narrowness and one-sidedness in the unfolding of its powers. This tendency is the necessary result of the principle of the division of labour on which professional studies are all based. The very forces which move civilization on its triumphant career, endanger the distortion of the individual intellect. By a foregoing liberal education, however, we preserve the balance of its native adjustments, and carry out the circle of its growing powers at all points. We liberalize its views and give breadth to its sympathies. We infuse the tone of courage and independence. We expose it to the hardening of the mountain breeze, and open to it a horizon on all sides, before it goes down into the struggle of its particular pursuit in life. It is thus less in danger of becoming a mere cog or band in the vast machine to which our modern utilitarianism would fain reduce society.

A course of studies in the faculty of the liberal arts, according to the criterion just laid down, would embrace not only a variety of subjects, but such a selection of the different departments of human knowledge as experience has shown to be best fitted for the mind's outgrowth. Art, Science and Philosophy are the fundamental departments of a proper curriculum. The first includes language, literature and æsthetics, in their broadest connections; the second embraces Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, and Chemistry; the third, moral, mental and political Philosophy. Each of these departments tends to develop a particular class of the activities. One trains the analytical faculty, another the generalizing; one develops the critical, another the speculative. In one direction the judgment is subjected to discipline, in another, the taste. The memory is exercised, but not at the expense of the reason; the imagination is unfolded and trained in harmonious movement with the grasp and vigour of the discursive faculty. The habit of attention—the art of “being a *whole man* to one thing at a time” is formed. Facts are comprehended in general principles. System and method preside over the entire intellectual movement; and the love of truth, the sense of the beautiful, and the force of duty become the master impulses. Thus we have the elements of mental power in harmonious combination and perfect balance, making the possessor a *well-educated man*.

There has been no small effort made, of late years, to improve



upon the scheme of liberal studies which has obtained the suffrages of many past generations. The physical sciences have made extensive and rapid advances during the last half-century. Commerce and the extraordinary facilities for oceanic intercourse have drawn the leading nations into much closer communication. A knowledge of three or four modern languages seems very desirable on the part of all persons liberally educated. And the very currents of American life tend to hurry young men onward as rapidly as possible upon active, business engagements. Urgent demands are made for a revision of the whole scheme of our higher education. In one direction enlargement is claimed; in another, elimination; in another the admission of entirely new branches of science; yet no one advocates the lengthening of a college course to six years. We may see a somewhat amusing instance of the drift of popular clamour, in the declaration of one of the oracles of Northern opinion, that a youth may have learned all that the schools and universities teach, and still be a pitifully ignorant man, unable to earn a week's subsistence. "A master of Latin and Greek," this authority adds, "who does not know how to grow potatoes, is far more imperfectly educated than many an unlettered backwoodsman."

The whole tribe of objections to the ordinary course of liberal studies, of which the foregoing is somewhat of an extreme illustration, may be answered in one word:—the paramount intention of the process to which a young man is subjected in his college course, is the highest possible improvement of his mind. How a man is to get a living; how he shall best and soonest acquire the practical skill—the faculty of work, by which he makes his week's or year's subsistence, is an important question, doubtless. But it is not *the* question which college life seeks to answer. To a starving man a meal of "potatoes" even, may, for the moment, be of greater importance than the treasures of the Vatican or Bodleian libraries—or all the gold, for that matter, of Australia. The absurdity consists in the elevation of the lowest type of physical labour to a plane with the highest intellectual tasks, as an instrument of mental cultivation. The mind's growth is a dynamical product, a living, *becoming* process, which works vigorously from within, and differs essentially from mechanical accretions, put on from without. Or, as DeQuincey finely expresses the same thing:—"no doctrine of importance, no complete truth can be transferred in a matured shape, into any man's understanding from without; it must arise by an act of genesis within the understanding itself." The crucial test of a seat of learning is not

the *cram* of what it affects to put into the mind, of multifarious knowledge, of scientific or even useful information; but the success with which it leads out the mental faculties, gives the largest degrees of intellectual power and refinement, and cultivates the best habits of thinking.

Instead of yielding to the intensely practical genius of the age and country, and to the demands to make our higher institutions of learning mere professional schools, these institutions ought but the more steadily to maintain the true position, and hold forth the sound doctrine. They should firmly resist the Idyllic sentimentality which is prepared to sacrifice sound and thorough scholarship at the shrine of showy but superficial accomplishments. To the utilitarian improvisation which demands that we teach in four years the *omne scibile*, and carry our ingenuous young men, fagging at mere elements and barren formulæ, stript of enthusiasm and weary of foot, around the vast cycle of knowledge, ending the whole affair which attempted every thing, in learning nothing, we should oppose the maxim of the truest and soundest utility, that superficial training and learned ignorance involve the most ruinous of costs. A high authority has said that it is far more improving to read one good book ten times, than to read ten good books once: *non multa sed multum*,—little perhaps, but accurate, has from ancient times obtained the authority of an axiom in education, from all who had any title to express an opinion on the subject. "A chapter critically and thoroughly mastered," says another high authority, "is worth more than a volume hastily gone over, considered either as the means of intellectual culture, or as a facility to further progress."

While the extreme is avoided on the one hand, of attempting to do more than can be done well and thoroughly, on the other hand full and exact occupation must be furnished to the student. His work must be directed by the guiding principle of eliciting on his part the largest amount of mental energy. "He who has conceived the purpose," says Dr. Olin, "of making of himself so considerable a thing as a *man*, may, at the outset, lay his account with no trivial expenditure of toil and painstaking." The Professor, it is true, sustains an important relation to this process. But his efforts are only conditional; the mental effort of the student is properly causal. Our entire scholastic apparatus is designed to call out, to encourage, to watch over this effort, by no means to supplant it. We want no easy methods, no shortened oute, no empiric Pestalozzianism, such as that which some years ago undertook to teach arithmetic by an instrument called the arithmometer,



and Geometry by another, called the mathemometer, by which the propositions of Euclid were supposed to be reduced to the comprehension of *young children*, and all Mathematics made easy! As well attempt to make a man out of a child simply by putting upon him the manly toga. Could Mathematics thus be made easy, we should need to turn that ancient science out of the course, and find something else that is difficult. The thinking faculty grows only by its own thinking. Apart from the vigorous exercise of thought, the instruction of books and teachers is to the student very much a traffic in unmeaning words—something like the luminous explanation of the steam-engine, in one of Horace Smith's characters:—"There is a thing that goes up and down, which is the *hydrostatic principle*."

The scholastic discipline of the Southern University, in the collegiate department, will require three daily recitations, each prepared carefully by a couple of hours' study of the text. Each officer will seek, by an exact examination in the recitation-room, to ascertain what the student has been able to do for himself in the preparation-room, during the hours of study. The society of a college coterie is no doubt pleasant. Books of general literature, reviews and newspapers furnish easy reading beyond dispute. To the embryo poet nothing were more delightful than to court the muses—"to sport with Amaryllis in the shade, and play with the tangles of Næra's hair." But young gentlemen come here not in search of gratifications for the imagination, but to secure the elements of intellectual greatness. Whoever enrolls himself a student of the University, voluntarily places himself under its *training*. He must make up his mind to the daily *drill*. He must expect to have his energies tasked—his sinews made strong by manly exercise. The study which involves thinking—the hardest kind of thinking; the study which is pursued upon a plan, systematically, courageously, will soon become both his incitement and reward. "Genius is *patience*," says Buffon.

The student to whom scholastic pursuits furnish full employment; whose aims are high; and who turns with genial ardour and scholarly aspiration to his work, is removed from many of the liabilities which beset college life. He who has only half-work, and whose selection goes in favour of those departments of education which commend themselves as involving least labour, finds time on his hands upon which academic duty seems to hold no claims. A very favourable condition is thus supplied for the approach of temptation. Alas! like the face of an April sky, youth has its changing hues, now bright then dark; its hours of promise, and its fast-coming

shadows to obscure the loveliness of that smiling promise. The danger is great to the extent in which the hold upon the affectionate respect of students by their officers is small. If, as it sometimes unfortunately happens, there should prevail a spirit that regards the faculty as a government in respect to which opposition is the normal and natural position of students; if the college administration should be more punctilious about small regulations, minute exactions, and trifling points of honour, than careful to maintain the influence which results from affectionate regard, and firm and able discharge of duty; if the power of religion should be low, and the chapel lend little aid to the administration; and no heavenly visitations come, ever and again, in the form of college revivals, then the reliance must be on what one of our accomplished authors calls "the *æsthetic* conscience,"—a sense of what is tasteful and becoming in the proprieties of good breeding and refinement. But experience shows that we cannot count too confidently on this. Popular sentiment in the college community has a tendency observable elsewhere, to override the private conscience. Young men of general respectability will too often swim with the stream. Undue reliance is placed in the power of combination. A season of agitation produces an *emeute*. The heroes of the barricades dictate terms and enjoy the sport, until the penalties are pronounced; and then suspension or expulsion turns out to be a somewhat abrupt and tragic close to the brief season of merriment. The catastrophe—injurious to all parties, as well as the preliminaries, might, in many instances, have been forestalled, had there been work enough for each student, and had there existed, from the first, a more cordial understanding between students and officers.

The non-resident policy which has been established here, has worked elsewhere with decided advantage. There is one result which is open to the most casual observation. This policy identifies the students to a large extent with the town community. They live in the families of the citizens, and become personally known to those families. To whatever extent the softening and refining and restraining influences of the family are felt—and they are among the most precious that can be brought to bear upon young men—the whole tendency is toward a good understanding and cordial fellow-feeling between the parties, producing respect on the one side, and affectionate interest on the other.

On the subject of admitting students, I must ask your indulgence for a remark or two. Defective scholarship has been the opprobrium of American higher education. The foundation for this, however,

is most commonly laid in the want of adequate preparation in the lower schools of instruction. An imperfectly trained teacher can hardly be expected to turn out thoroughly trained pupils. Superficial attainments in the master, perpetuate themselves in his scholars. Thus it not unfrequently happens that in the Freshman year at college, a student "has to be *unmade* before he can be *made*." The higher order of instruction proper to a Professor's chair, must be substituted by instruction in the elements. Habits of superficial study must be extirpated ; in a word, the Professor must take the place and perform the functions of the academic teacher. To supply a proper corrective, we should go to the source of the evil, which lies in the public sentiment of the country. American life goes at too fast a pace. We have not time enough to give our sons an elaborate and thorough preparation for the college course. This impatience of parents must be checked, if they desire for their sons the most precious fruits of liberal training. Restraint must be put upon the eagerness of our youth to take the Preparatory or College course at a gallop, as though learning were the prize of a steeple-chase. In fine, a weighty obligation, as I conceive, rests upon the Faculties of our higher institutions of learning, to maintain a firmer attitude in admitting under-graduates. Let the extent of the applicant's preparation be tested by an exact examination, and let the class be assigned him for which he is really prepared in accordance with the requirements of a high standard. If this be judged inexpedient in colleges which depend on their patronage to pay their officers, in the Southern University at least, where no such embarrassment exists, it is due to the Board of Trustees, to this community, to the sentiment of the Alabama Conference, and to public expectation, that the Faculty should insist upon a standard of preparation equal to that of the foremost seat of learning in this country. We can very well *afford*—to use a popular term—to be exact and even stringent, though at the cost of not having our halls crowded at first. We are only surrendering *to-day* to a more brilliant *to-morrow*. Our policy is sure to win, at no distant day, the confidence of the country. While it confers a public benefaction it will secure an honourable distinction.

I must content myself with a brief reference to another topic, worthy of a larger notice. An earnest application to study must, of necessity, exhaust the vital power and endanger the physical health. A compensating element in public education which shall preserve the equilibrium of the nervous and muscular systems, so necessary



to a healthy brain, and keep the stomach free from the troubles of dyspepsia, is very desirable. Healthful mental recreation in connection with bodily exercise, is the desideratum. Gymnastics and calisthenics, pursued as a system, and particularly under a master's eye, would be apt, as soon as the novelty wore away, to degenerate into a task and burden, stript of the exhilaration necessary to sustain the physical exertion. I know not that I can recommend any thing better than the system generally adopted by the students of the English Universities. At Cambridge, Bristed tells us, the sponge and horse-hair glove are among the regular accessories of the student's toilet. His exercise is as much a daily necessity to him as his food ; and by exercise he means all combinations of fresh air and muscular exercise which shake a man well up, and bring big drops from all his pores. The staple exercise is walking. Two hours are devoted to it, in all states of the weather. Between two and four o'clock, all the roads in the neighborhood of Cambridge—that is to say within four miles of it, are covered with men taking their "constitutionals." Eight hours' a day is the ordinary amount of study gone through by the aid of this eight miles' walk. The vigor of the English constitution, and the length of years attained by a large proportion of their public men, are to be attributed very much to the "constitutionals" of their educational life. In the American student, *who* has not been pained, often, to see, instead of the brawny chest, and hard muscle, and high health,

— "The aching eye,  
The pallid cheek, the trembling frame, the head,  
Throbbing with thought, and torn with agony"—

the result of ambitious aspiration, close application, and dread of fresh air and regular exercise.

Religious instruction, as connected with our forms of higher education, presents one of the most important aspects of the whole subject. Mental culture acquired at the expense of hearty religious convictions, involves a serious cost. Literature and science are properly hand-maids to religion. When they become antagonists, and are made to array themselves against Christianity, the evil assumes a portentous magnitude. Institutions of learning based upon the so-called "liberal principle" which excludes religion from education or imposes a total silence on the subject, from the apprehension of offending the prejudices of religionists or awakening the antipathies of unbelievers, are obviously unfitted by that very principle to meet the demands of a christian time and country. Public sentiment rightly requires that the men to whose training the youth of a chris-

tian people are entrusted, should be neither infidel nor neutral on the great question of Christianity ; and that their instructions even when religion is not the direct subject of investigation, should be pervaded by the christian *animus*. Denominational Colleges and Universities have grown out of a persuasion of this kind, very generally felt.

On the other hand, it is very possible that more may be expected of institutions reared by the liberality of the Church, than can ordinarily be realized. Very possibly, many a father who hoped to turn over the responsibility of furnishing his sons with religious knowledge and christian principles, to some one of the great educational centres of the Church, meanwhile neglecting his own duty, may be doomed to disappointment. You must allow me to remind you that religious culture begins at the fireside and the family altar. Character is moulded, and often destiny shaped, by home instructions and family influences. Religious training goes back to the cradle, and involves dedication to God in infancy, instruction in the principles of divine truth as the mind opens, and proper restraint with advancing years. Besides, there is the powerful influence which comes from parental, christian example, silent it may be, as the great powers of nature, but mighty to mould the plastic heart of childhood—mightier perhaps, than words or arguments. Let no parent presume to think that he can devolve on others the duty of thus training his children. Nor let the church at large indulge the delusion that denominational schools can preserve the primitive spirit of religion, fresh and vital, if once it has fallen into general decadence in the family and Home. Our trust is that the large majority of young gentlemen who may matriculate at this institution, will bring with them those religious impressions and moulds of early habit which a pious training at home has formed. No doubt, parental anxiety will follow them hither. The prayer of many a mother will reach the ear of God in behalf of her son, as he plies his daily tasks here. The memory of many a father's counsels and example will rise in influential forms, in the hour of temptation. This is the ground-work of our hope that public education may be truly christianized.

It will be observed, moreover, that denominational institutions of learning, distinct though they are from theological schools, secure in their Faculties a unanimity of religious sentiment, and a cordiality of religious co-operation, which are most auspicious to the full effect of religious example, instructions, and measures. In addition to scholastic accomplishments, a Professor to meet the full responsibilities of his position, should possess strength of faith, devotional fervour,



a habit of affectionate intercourse with students, and a tender interest in their spiritual welfare. These elements of character can, in an institution of the Church, have free scope; all may be combined into a predominant religious influence, presiding over the functions and offices of education, pervading them all as a vital, hallowing presence.

The Greek New Testament holds the place of honour among all the text-books of the Southern University, since it alone is carried through the whole course, from matriculation to graduation. It is the authentic record of that *Gospel* which will be preached here—I trust, “not in word only, but in demonstration of the spirit and with power.” This is the heaven-appointed instrument of man’s conversion, edification, and salvation. In its truth, in its power, in its suitableness to all stages of culture, all advances of civilization, all ages and conditions, we have an unquestioning confidence. It alone can turn the moral darkness of man into a day of glory. “It is perfect, converting the soul.” It is eminently the guide of youth. From the height of its majesty the Gospel looks down on all research of thought, all progress of science and social improvement; it lends its aid to all, but borrows none. Omnipotence moves through its agencies, and its provisions grasp all interests, and ages and worlds. Its God is “the God of salvation;” and nature, whose elements fell down at his feet and acknowledged his power, in the days of his flesh, still does homage to his glory in the voice of seas and thunders—its stars his torch-bearers—its nebular firmaments chiming the chorus of his praise.

When I bid you rely on the power of the Gospel, as one of the chief means by which a pervading christian influence is to be hoped for in this Institution, you will understand me to mean that the original system of truth and grace revealed in the New Testament will be adhered to in its full integrity and strength. The great substance of that truth—“God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life”—will not be darkened into a dreamy mysticism, which, passing through the light of divine truth without catching its irradiations, soars to the region of the transcendental, in the dim wanderings of sentimentality;—nor transmuted into the mummeries of a poor formalism which substitutes for the life of God in the soul of man, pantomime and pageant, the mere masquerade of worship—finds religion in certain styles of ecclesiastical architecture, and sanctity in a particular quarter of the sky—and instead of feeding the soul with knowledge, holds up to the eye the painted toys of a puerile superstition.

Nor will a gospel, according to science, take the place of the "glad tidings," as the instrument of the soul's regeneration. Let metaphysical philosophy push its analysis into the secret places of the mind, and fathom the depths of spontaneity, autonomy and liberty, which constitute its personality; these researches all terminate in the discovery of humanity in self-conflict; all the speculations of psychology point to the God-man, who alone can confer spiritual life. Let nature display her august Temple, and open to the view of science, its deep foundations. We trace the forces which were in play beneath the crystalizations of the solid granite. We read in the stony sepulchres which entomb the dead of long cycles of past animal existence, the power of that Almighty One with whom "a thousand years are as one day." We approach the vestibule. Organization the most exquisite, adaptations the most perfect, stand open to observation. Visions and voices meet the rational insight on every hand. We perceive the eternal archetypes which were in the Supreme Reason, and catch the sentiment of the sublime in dimly apprehending the supernatural. But science strives in vain to raise the curtain which shuts out the inner shrine. Beyond that veil shines in pavilioned glory, the majesty ineffable and unapproachable, of the Uncreated Mind. Standing with uncovered head and awed spirit in the outer court, unable to catch a glimpse, yet wondering and longing, the gospel lifts the veil and reveals to man "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." And the theme of all our preaching is "Christ crucified:" "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever."

In this new seat of learning, then, let the authority and influence of Christianity be enthroned as supreme over its whole scheme of educational influences. August is its function, the culture of the faculties of mind—the unfolding of the divine gifts of reason, judgment and invention—treasures in comparison to which princely revenues are dross, and hereditary titles mere courtly gewgaws:—powers which construct and defend governments, institutions, laws; which invent the mighty steam-engine, and create the immortal poem, and forge the massive links of the grand oration; which adorn civilization, bridge oceans, girdle continents, and bind nation to nation:—powers which lift the torch upon the "dark backward and abysm of time," and read the hieroglyphics written on the stratified rocks of primeval ages:—powers which climb upward to the stars; interpret their shining syllables, and enter "the unfolded gates burning in the sun." Sublimier still, its office to measure

the fearful greatness of the mind by its immortal destination ; by the tragic grandeur of its very disorders ; by the magnificent reach of its insatiable cravings ; by the cost of its redemption ; by the doom of the last day :—to lift up all the knowledge here imparted to the scale of its immortality ; and to point its wandering destinies to the Cross of the Son of God, as the centre of all light and hope.

In the humble hope that whatever of experience, of capability, of industry I possess may, by the blessing of God, be rendered tributary to these great ends, I assume, with unaffected self-distrust, the weighty responsibilities of the office to which the partiality of the Board of Trustees has invited me. If by the divine help we may succeed in carrying out into full practical effect the principles just adverted to, I shall entertain the confident expectation that the future alumni of the Southern University will turn to it as the place where the most tender friendships have been formed ; around which, in after life, shall cling the most delightful, hallowed reminiscences. With prophetic insight into the future, I should see the successive processions of graduates, as they passed away from our rostrum with the blessing of their Alma Mater, reappearing in the great world, men of mark, in whom shining ability would not be substituted for large and devout spirit, nor splendour of talent for the virtues of private character, nor a surface of graceful accomplishments be found to cover corruption at the heart. I should see, as the result of high intellectual cultivation in wedlock with genuine Christian principle, the men who won and wore the laurelled honours of this seat of learning, flashing as polished jewels in the magnificent crown of Humanity ; illustrious for goodness and greatness alike ; destined to be finally set in the gemmed coronet of the Saviour's rejoicing. And down along the distant centuries of the future, I should trace the influence of this Institution, venerable then in years, but ever fresh in power—growing with the colossal growth of the country, widening in the sphere of its noble aims, richer and richer in the fame of its greatness—its name graven on the ages as they pass, its impress stamped upon a multitude of minds destined to outlive all ages, measured by the chronicles of time.







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